

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of claims:

1 (original): An oligonucleotide that includes a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7 and their complementary sequences.

2 (original): The oligonucleotide according to claim 1, which consists of SEQ ID NO: 2 or its complementary sequence.

3 (original): The oligonucleotide according to claim 1, which consists of SEQ ID NO: 3, or its complementary sequence.

4 (original): The oligonucleotide according to claim 1, which consists of SEQ ID NO: 4, or its complementary sequence.

5 (original): The oligonucleotide according to claim 1, which consists of SEQ ID NO: 5, or its complementary sequence.

6 (original): The oligonucleotide according to claim 1, which consists of SEQ ID NO: 6, or its complementary sequence.

7 (original): The oligonucleotide according to claim 1, which consists of SEQ ID NO: 7, or its complementary sequence.

8 (currently amended): Use of an oligonucleotide as defined in ~~any of claims~~ claim 1 to 7, as a probe or primer, for hybridizing with and optionally amplifying a nucleic acid from a hepatitis B virus (HBV).

9 (original): Use of an oligonucleotide that includes a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:11, and their complementary sequence, as a probe for hybridizing with a nucleic acid from HBV.

10 (original): The use according to claim 9, wherein said oligonucleotide consists of a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:11, and their complementary sequence.

11 (original): The use according to claim 9, wherein said oligonucleotide includes a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:11, and their complementary sequence and carries a fluorophore moiety at one terminus, and a quencher moiety at the other terminus.

12 (original): The use according to claim 11, wherein said oligonucleotide consists of a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14 and SEQ ID NO:15, and carries a fluorophore moiety at one terminus, and a quencher moiety at the other terminus.

13 (original): A set of oligonucleotides consisting of an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:2, and at least an oligonucleotide selected from the group consisting of an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6 and SEQ ID NO:7.

14 (original): A set of oligonucleotides according to claim 13, which consists of:

(i) an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:2, and an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:3;

(ii) an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:2, and an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:4;

(iii) an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:2, and an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:5;

(iv) an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:2, and an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:6;

(v) an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:2, and an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:7;

(vi) an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:2, an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:4 and an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:5; and

(vii) an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:2, an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:6 and an oligonucleotide that includes SEQ ID NO:7.

15 (currently amended): A set of oligonucleotides comprising:

- a) a set of oligonucleotides according to claim 13 ~~or 14~~; and
- b) an oligonucleotide that includes a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:11, and their complementary sequence.

16 (currently amended): A set of oligonucleotides ~~according to claim 15~~, that comprises:

- a) a set of oligonucleotides according to claim 13 ~~or 14~~; and

b) an oligonucleotide that consists of a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14 and SEQ ID NO:15, and carries a fluorophore moiety at one terminus, and a quencher moiety at the other terminus.

17 (currently amended): A method for specifically detecting a HBV by amplification in a biological sample, which method comprises the steps consisting of:

a) contacting a set of oligonucleotides according to claim 13 ~~or 14~~ with a biological sample or nucleic acid preparation obtained from a biological sample, under conditions suitable for the oligonucleotides to hybridize to a HBV nucleic acid present in the sample;

b) amplifying said HBV nucleic acid using said oligonucleotides as primers;

c) detecting the amplification product, indicative of the presence of a HBV in the biological sample.

18 (original): The method according to claim 17, wherein HBV nucleic acid is amplified by polymerase chain reaction.

19 (currently amended): The method according to claim 17 ~~or 18~~, wherein the detection of said amplification product is performed by using an oligonucleotide that includes a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:11, and their complementary sequence, and that is detectably labelled, as a probe.

20 (original): The method according to claim 19, wherein said oligonucleotide that includes a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:11, and their complementary sequence, and carries a fluorophore moiety at one terminus, and a quencher moiety at the other terminus.

21 (currently amended): The method according to claim 19 ~~or 20~~, wherein said oligonucleotide that includes a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:11, and their complementary sequence, is SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14 or SEQ ID NO:15.

22 (currently amended): A kit for amplifying HBV in a biological sample, which kit comprises :

- at least a set of oligonucleotides according to claim 13 ~~or 14~~, useful as primers;
- means for amplifying a HBV nucleic acid.

23 (original): The kit according to claim 22, which further comprises means for the detection of the amplified product.

24 (currently amended): The kit according to claims 22 ~~or 23~~, wherein the means for amplifying HBV nucleic acid are means for amplification by Polymerase Chain Reaction.

25 (currently amended): The kit according to ~~any of claims~~ claim 22 to 24, which comprises an oligonucleotide that includes a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:11, and their complementary sequence, detectably labelled and useful as a probe.

26 (original): The kit according to claim 25, wherein said oligonucleotide that includes a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:11, and their complementary sequence, is SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14 or SEQ ID NO:15.